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CRITICISM
ON THE
FOUNDLING.
—
IN A
LETTER
TO
The AUTHOR.

*Unfinish'd Things, one knows not what to call,
Their Generation's so equivocal.*

POPE.

L O N D O N :
Printed for M. Cooper, at the Globe in
Pater-noster-Row.

M.DCC.XLVIII.

[Price Six-pence.]

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FOUNDING

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Unjust Things, are known not only to exist,
Their Government is exposed.
POPE

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S I R,

A S you must needs know, every
Man who submits his Per-
formance to the Judgment
of the Publick, is liable to
undergo their Censure, I don't think
myself under the Necessity of an Apo-
Blogy

logy for the following Remarks (however severe or unjust you may think 'em) upon your Comedy. I am an Author myself, and don't doubt but my Works have often labour'd under as severe a Censure, from People who were as little able to judge of my Labours, as perhaps you may think I am of yours——But however contemptible my Observations may appear to you, I am an *Englishman*, a Word which carries Liberty in the very Sound—and if you shou'd ask, What *Right* I have to judge? I answer you in the Words of a famous Satirist,

—— *Because I bought the Book.*

This is a small Title, but a just one, and you can't dispute it. But to strengthen it by another Circumstance, I paid my Money at the Pit, and saw your Play the first Night——So, upon this Title I shall begin, and go on with you Scene by Scene.

Act the First.

THE Piece opens with a Conversation between two Gentlemen: The Difference of their Characters, I take, to be only this; one a Person of Fortune, with a little flashy Wit; and the other a brave Man of War, but a Simpleton. This latter is so describ'd by the first,

A Great Boy that has lost his Way, &c.

Which I have no great Objection to, only I wou'd alter the Reading a little, and say:

A Great Boy that had lost his Way, and drop'd his Custard, &c.

The Addition of these four Words wou'd, I think, greatly heighten the Idea of

Blubbering, &c.

The

The next Thing that struck all the Audience, and me in particular, was the Description of *Fidelia's* coming into the World :

Drop'd from the Clouds, &c.

And it is, doubtless, very fine ; only we wish'd to have seen all that Operation of the Heavens made into a Grand Machine : And, tho' it might have appear'd a little Pantomimical, wou'd, doubtless, have given Pleasure — You can't be insensible that,

The Winds whistling, the Rains christening the Child, with a Hag fostering it,

And the rest of the poetical Regalia, cou'd give us no less an Idea than what an old Proverb has many Years ago convey'd to us, *viz.*

When the Sky falls, we shall catch Larks ;

And

And, doubtless, wou'd have chang'd
the last Word of this old Phrase, and
made us for the future cry,

When the Sky falls, we shall catch
FIDYS.

The rest of the Scene I have no Ob-
jection to; for I think very few Gen-
tlemen, now a Days, can hold out so
long a Conversation, without growing
extreamly dull.

Now enter two Ladies; *Fidy*, from
the Skies; and *Rosetta*, from Bed——
I was very uneasy to know what the
latter had been dreaming; for, by her
own Confession, she is a great Mistress
of ideal Life——But she left us as
much in the Dark, as she was when
she was dreaming——So I was forc'd
to be satisfy'd, that her Vision was
Fidy's falling out of the Sky, and the
great Bump the Cradle gave when it
reach'd the Ground, had wak'd her——
I will pass this over, being impatient
to come to a Stroke——No, I can't
call

call it a *Stroke*; but a *Touch*, that *touch'd* the whole Audience: I mean that significant Tip *Belmont* gives his Sister. And let me tell you, Sir, your Merit in this Point is very considerable: For if

To pen a Whisper well be difficult;

To pen a Tip o' th' Shoulder, must be equally laborious; and, of Course, meritorious. The rest of this Scene is design'd only to shew how great a Fool the Colonel is, which indeed we wanted no farther Proof of——There are some pretty Bits of Wit in it——Such as,

Away Prop, and down Scaffold:

Which I take to be a Satire upon the tumbling of the Scaffold upon *Tower-Hill*.

This Scene ends with the Receipt of a Letter from Mr. *Faddle*, with an Invitation to hear the Rehearsal of a new Opera, which gives the Colonel
fresh

fresh Uneasiness, and the Lady new Opportunity of Triumphant: And the Act ended, as I have seen many others do, with all the Performers leaving the Stage, and the Music striking up.

Act the Second.

THIS begins with Sir *Robin Hood*, and Sir *Little John*, two Gentlemen of great Gravity, in serious Conversation. Their Understandings seem'd to be exactly equal; for what Sir *Charles* said, the other in his own Words assented to, by Way of Echo to his Judgment; and, had it been set to Music, wou'd have had a fine Effect——But a Dispute arose in the Pit, whether Sir *Charles* was an old, or a young Man, and various Opinions were given——But at last an arch Gentleman said, how can you debate this Matter any longer, don't you see he has a Crutch-head Cane, and one Tye of his Wig before?——This unobserv'd
Mark

Mark of his Age being thus pointed out, settled the Dispute, which otherwise might have gone nigh to have interrupted the Performance——But, positively, the Head of the Cane is not big enough, and may easily escape Half the Audience——Tho' by this Argument I lost Part of the Scene, I found the main End was, that these two old Fellows resolv'd to be Watches to *Belmont*——Tho' I am sure the Little One must be the best *Watch*, for he is a *Repeater*.

Then follow'd a Scene between the Father and Son; which, from a Disturbance in the Gallery, I heard but little of: Tho' one next me, who had attended more closely, said,

The best Hum-buz Scene I ever saw.

As I did not understand the Phrase, I take it upon his Word. This was follow'd by an Entrance of *Rosetta*, who finds her Brother musing; upon which, he tells her, he was considering what a
Coquet

Coquet was made for. What a vast Number of various Ideas must be crowded into that Gentleman's Head; for the last Words he spoke were pertinent to *Fidelia*, who is quite the Reverse; unless you will allow a Man in Love, may have his Brains turn'd upside down; and then indeed, *Rosetta* might, at the Moment of her Enterance, be uppermost—Their Discourse ran into a Consideration of their particular Vices; and the Strength of their Arguments were engag'd to prove 'em all Virtues, which at last they agreed; and they parted with a Hint from the young Gentleman, that he was going to endeavour to debauch *Fidelia*, who seem'd very sorry she was not as easily to be gain'd as herself—The Colonel enter'd, (and, I thought, in a lucky Moment) for *Rosy* seem'd wound up to the Height of Inclination, and desir'd some rakeish Conversation from the Colonel, which ended in a great *Miff* on both Sides.—*Faddle* came in; but, as a Friend to the Theatre, I fell asleep till the Beginning of

The Third Act.

THE two Ladies were in the old Strain: One was using Men ill; and t'other was more discreet, than to allow Affection cou'd conquer Nature: And to prove her Argument, began a Song, which *tun'd* the whole Audience. As a Lover of Music, I lik'd the musical Rhetorick; but, as a Lover of Propriety, I wish'd the Song had been exhibited in the *Green-Room*; and, as Mr. Bayes says,

Been suppos'd upon the Stage.

This Harmony was follow'd by a Letter of Discord, which seem'd to shock both the Ladies: One desir'd to see it; t'other wish'd she had never seen it; one wanted to read it; t'other refus'd it; one said it was false; t'other was doubtful: And, Hey!—Trusty *John* was call'd again—*Faddle* was fetch'd—*Faddle* said something (nothing to the

(I I)

the Purpose) and so return'd to his Bottle.—— But the Gentleman came and was d — n'd mad — And then, *Faddle* and he had the prettiest Scene, to inform one another of what they knew already, that ever I saw.

The Scene drew, and discover'd Sir *Charles* and his Crutch - Cane, in a private Conference with *Fidelia*, that really I did not like; and began to recollect, what *Faddle* had said concerning his Designs upon the Lady—— But *Faddle* got into the Chamber (as his Friend had directed him) and overheard all their Discourse——which made me think a little better of Sir *Charles* and the Lady; for, by there being such a Multitude of Doors, the Chamber was not so private as I at first imagin'd.

Act

Act the Fourth

BEGINS with a Sort of Dialogue between the Colonel and *Rosetta*, about Matrimony : Every Circumstance, in Relation to Prudence, Love, and provident Management is consider'd; and that so nicely, that the Lady offers to give up Neatness, to save the Charges of Washing.—Then *Faddle* had a little Discourse with his Friend, which ended in seeing Sir *Charles* coming thro' the Hall : And *Faddle* (by your Order, Sir) desir'd to try his Wit ; but unhappily placing his *Fun* upon Sir *Charles*, he took the Thing wrong, and shut the Door upon *Faddle*, that he might not run away. But it is my Opinion, that if *Faddle* had happen'd to have had more Courage then he suspected, Sir *Charles* wou'd have been too nimble for him ; for he took Care to leave the Door he came in at wide open, for fear of an Accident—How many
Doors

Doors the Room had, I can't say, but
old-fashion'd Buildings I know are very
doorous.

Faddle (frighten'd at the Crutch-
Stick) made, as he calls it, an honest
Confession, and so departed in Peace
—— But the young hot Gentleman
happening to *blunder* upon Sir *Charles*,
bravely acknowledg'd his Crime, and
promis'd Reparation : And Sir *Charles*
went out, to give an Answer to the
Letter he did not understand.—— The
Act ended with a Resolution of the
young Gentleman's, to get *Fidelia's*
Virtue to find out an Excuse for his
Baseness.

Act the Fifth.

THIS begins with Sir *Roger* in a Passion; which is occasion'd by a Letter he had just receiv'd, and is strangely impatient to communicate to Sir *Charles*, who immediately joins him, and reads the Epistle; in which he seems to see Something as clear as the Sun, but left us as much in the Dark as ever.

The second Scene of this Act is the last: It begins with an humble Supplication of *Belmont's* to his dear *Fidy* for Pardon; which I can't say positively she does, or does not grant, for she has so many fine Sentiments of Honour, Virtue, Gratitude, &c. that the Matter is lost in the Beauty of the Expression. They are soon interrupted by an Entrance of the whole Drama; among which is a Stranger, whom I took at first for a Justice of Peace, and expected every Moment, when

when he wou'd write a *Mittimus* for Young *Belmont*, or call for *Faddle* to be brought in by the Constable to be examin'd, concerning the wicked Intrigue that had been carried on for the four preceding Acts.

However, this Gentleman (I have forgot his Name) was not the Person we took him for; for instead of giving us a Sample of his Power (tho' he make a Blustering at his first Appearance) he was so question'd, and bully'd, and accus'd, that he was glad to make a speedy Retreat.

He was no sooner gone, than the rest of the Family fell into a Sort of *Christmas* Entertainment, and every one told his Story: And indeed, eleven of 'em were very pretty, but the last was rather dull and tedious——And I can't help observing, that tho' this was a natural, pleasant, and historical Scene, it suffer'd greatly for want of proper Decorations, and a right Disposition of the Characters. This was owing chiefly
to

to the Absence, or Neglect of *John*; who indeed, to do him Justice, had hitherto behav'd with the utmost Diligence, and was always at Hand, when he was call'd for——A certain Sign he was neither cramming his Guts in the Kitchen, kissing the Maids in the Pantry, or smoaking his Pipe at the Alehouse: And I hope this Character will get *John* into Place, tho' Sir *Charles Raymond*, and *Charles Belmont*, and *Charles Faddle*, shou'd all leave the Country To-morrow.

But as this Blunder may be easily corrected, I'll give you a little Sketch of what I mean.

Soon as the passionate Gentleman left the House, I suppose the Family all *Dégagé*, and by themselves——Then let *John* bring Half a Dozen Chairs, for the Characters to seat themselves, Sir *Charles* in the Middle, and the young Fry on each Side——At a Corner of the Room, nearest the Fire, let there be plac'd a Stool, with Pipes
and

and Tobacco, and an Elbow-Chair, for Sir *Roger* to regale with, while the Family are engag'd in their different Histories.

By this Means Sir *Roger* will be as conspicuous, and as much taken Notice of, as e'er a Talker of 'em all: Nor shall we expect (as we all did the first Night) any Story from him.

This will greatly mark the Taciturnity of his Character; and, lest ignorant People shou'd imagine him struck Dumb, let him mutter at a Distance some broken Sentences; such as—— Good Tobacco—— Wine is too new——*John*——(here let him whisper)——All your Good Healths——Bring a clean Pipe——&c. &c. &c.

I wou'd say something of the Performers; but their own Merit is so conspicuous, that I find myself

D self

self unequal to the Task I once de-
sign'd to undertake. Which is all
from
Hitherto

By this Means Sir Roger will be
as conspicuous, and as much taken
notice of as *Your humble Servant, &c.*
all: Nor shall we expect (as we all
did the first Night) any Story from
him.

This will greatly mark the Tact-
fulness of his Character; and, lest
ignorant People should imagine him
thick and stupid, I will say as a
Distance from broken Sentences; such
as — Good Tobacco — Wine is
too new — John — (here let him
whisper) — All your Good Wishes
— Bring a clean Pipe — &c. &c.



I would not say anything of the
Performers; but their own Merit is
so conspicuous, that I find my-
self

